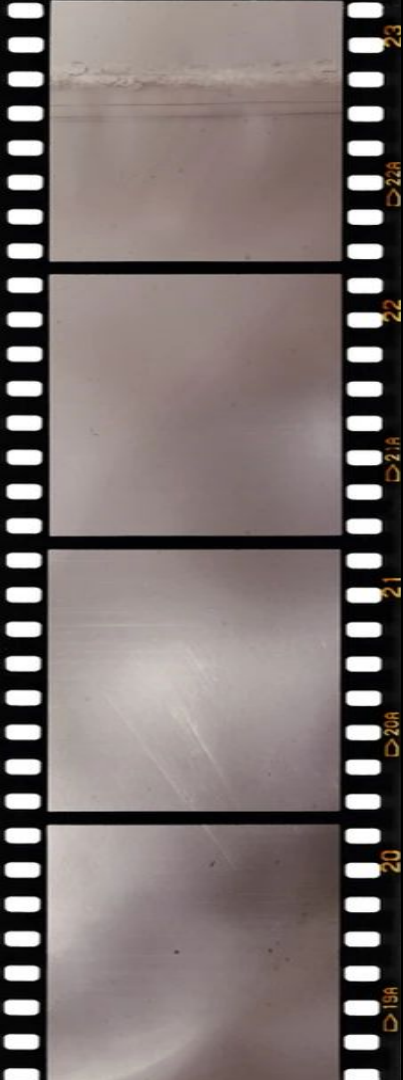




# Irish Film Codes



IRISH FILM BOARD  
BORD SCANNÁN NA hÉIREANN



MPA

200-7

08440

200-7



# *The Lad From Old Ireland (1910)*

America : "The Land of Golden Hopes"  
"Typical immigration story"

2A

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*Ireland: A  
Nation  
(1914)  
Released  
1917*

2A

2A

"Brave Sam M<sup>e</sup> Allister  
gave his life for Dwyer  
and his comrade."

Gaelic Film Co.

"Robert defies the  
infamous Major Sir  
at Dublin Castle."

Gaelic Film Co.

"Much to say why my Reputation  
should be rescued from false  
ACCUSATION and CALUMNY"

"I tried to achieve for my  
COUNTRY, what WASHINGTON  
achieved for AMERICA"

"Am I to be APPALLED and  
FALSIFIED by a mere remnant  
of mortality here--BY YOU ?"

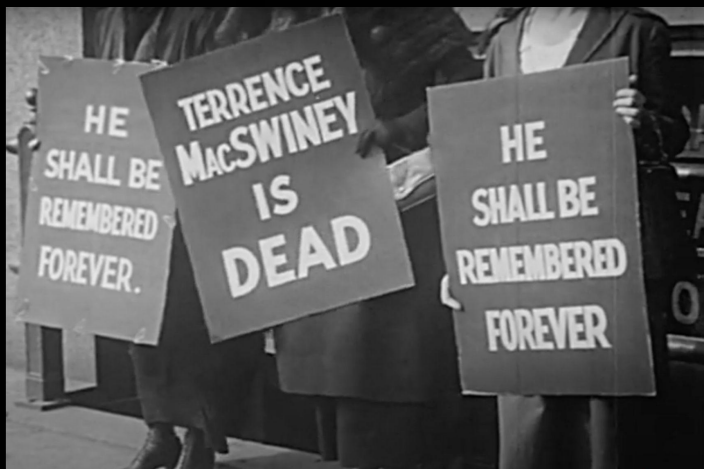
"Let no man defame MY MEMORY  
by believing that I could have  
engaged in any CAUSE  
but that of my COUNTRY'S  
LIBERTY and  
INDEPENDENCE"

"Were it possible to collect  
all the INNOCENT BLOOD that  
you have SPILLED in your  
UNHALLOWED MINISTRY in one  
great RESERVOIR,  
your lordship MIGHT SWIM  
IN IT"

"Your ENEMIES  
accuse me of a desire  
for the INDEPENDENCE of  
IRELAND.  
I admit the charge, and let them  
make the best of it."

As usual, British troops in  
armored cars add a menacing  
touch to the solemn procession





Arthur Griffith

- Founder of  
Sinn Finn

## Conversation with America

### Knocknagow (1918)

\$\$\$

- James Mark Sullivan (Irish American Journalist) :  
Founder of IFC (Irish Film Company)
- Inspired IFC
- "A sprawling story of Evictions, forced emigration, and triumphant immigration"
- A new Birth of a Nation to perform better and show Ireland's National identity.

- Both stage director origins
- wide camera angles with little editing

### Birth of a Nation (1915)

- Representative of Southern views of the Civil War
- Ireland viewed it as a strong sense of identity

### Carmen (1916)

### The Battle of Somme (1916)

## British Distaste and Conflict

- British disliked for their representation in *Ireland: A Nation*, caused many censorship issues and release was delayed for 3 years until 1917.
- Difficulties in censorship throughout the 1910s and 20s.

### In the Days of St. Patrick (1920)

"Interesting silent tells the story of 4th Century Saint Patrick- the prince who became a slave, the slave who became a priest, the priest who converted a nation."

### Irish Destiny (1926)

"Love story set in the Irish War of Independence; includes footage of actual fighting"



## *The Censorship Act of 1923*

### *Restrictions :*

- *Indecency*
- *Obscenity or Blasphemy*
- *Presentation of Principals contrary to public morality*
- *First act of media in the Irish Free State!*
- *To control both films made within the state and originating outside of it*
- *Uphold Catholic Morality at all times, and represent Irish political history with Respect of Republican character*



## Guests Of A Nation (1935)

*"During the Irish War of Independence in 1921, a pair of IRA soldiers are ordered to guard two British prisoners, but face a dilemma when they bond with their captives".*

- Sergei Eisenstein
- Rebellion and Revolution
- The Kuleshov Effect
- Engage, Inform, Persuade
- Call to Action
- Secrete shows with District Justice in attendance

*"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."*

*- Aristotle (Lev Kuleshov)*

## Theories Of Montage



Battleship Pudovkin : Odessa Steps : 1925



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*Political  
Graphic  
Elements*

2A

2A

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*The Call To  
Action*

2A

2A



## Censorship of Film Act Amendments :

1930

Extended the film act to include talkies (vocal or other sounds produced by mechanical means)

1970

Allows films to be re-submitted for evaluation after 7 years

Video Recording  
Act (1989)

A film Cannot be shown if:

- Causes someone to commit a crime
- Stir hatred for a group or person based on race, color. Nationality, religion, ethnic or national origins, membership of the traveller community, or sexual orientation

1992

Enables Minister of Justice to appoint assistant censors to the official censorship of film in the performance of his functions.



## *The National Film Institute (1943)*

- Church sponsored organization
- strong catholic principles
- Quarterly Journals assessing film suitability
- Workshops
- Provided direct funding for filmmaking that followed their strictly moral and ethical agenda

*"Strove to ensure that decent films were being made in accordance with the Papal directives on motion picture"*

*Even throughout WWII Ireland's focus was on building a National identity through reinforcing their own image of independence and self determination.*

## *Our Country (1947)*

*One of the few political oppositional films to question the current government of 1947*

## *Housing Discrimination (1953)*

*Government sponsored documentaries investigating Tyrone County (North) which North Ireland protested saying it was none of the southern governments business.*

## *Ardmore Studios (1953)*

- *The government's first attempt to develop the Irish film industry*
- *National and international film production*

*"A signal to the world that Irish cinema had a place on the international stage"*

## *Mise Eire (1959)*

- *Entirely narrated in the Irish language*
- *Compiled entirely of footage and newspaper reports from Sinn Féin's win in British parliament*

*"The most explicit statement of unproblematic nationalism ever seen"*  
*"Heralded as the official history of the Irish State"*

*1960s saw economic downfall for Ardmore*

*1973 sold to Radio Telefis Eireann (Founded in 1960)*

*1975 became The National Film Studios of Ireland*

## New Wave Cinema (1962)

*"A National cinema should express not so much a single, coherent view of the nation as express the informed personal perspectives of artists with something to say about their own society"*

- *Oberhausen Manifesto*

### Bob Quinn

- *First self reflective films of the Irish New Wave*
- *Poitin (1978) West Ireland featuring criminal activity - Subverted stereotypes of genre and quirky Irish characters*
- *Family (1978 and Atlantean (1984) Present a hippie commune in the west - alternative to traditional notions of family relationships*
- *To deconstruct the fundamental basis of Irish culture and Identity*



## *Our Boys (1981)*

- Most controversial production for Irish TV
- Depicted physical abuse of boys by christian brothers
- Confronted institutional care
- Considered sensitive for broadcast and not shown until 1991

## *Maeve (1981)*

### *Condom Train Campaign*

- Woman to Belfast for illegal contraceptives
- To raise the legal age of marriage

## *Employment Equality Act (1977)*

*A bold cinematic assertion of new sense of Irish femininity. Funded by the BFI. Northern setting of a young woman visiting old friends and family to find a new sense of self*

*Aggressively debunked stereotypical images of Ireland and its people  
Challenged audiences to see Ireland in a different light*



## *The Film Board (1980)*

- *First chance to fund feature films without state support*
- *Taoiseach Charles P. Haughey disbanded the board in 1987 for lack of profitability*
- *Re-activated in 1993*

## *Angel (1982) By Neil Jordan*

- *Partially funded by the Film Board but mostly funded by BFI*
- *Cork Film Festival (1982) caused anger*
  - *Did not represent Irish film cinema*
- *Reinforced traditional imagery of Ireland as a mystical place in the hold of political violence rather than a self identified image of independence*

## Late 80s - 90s Cinema

### Mother Ireland (1988)

Banned by UK TV for presenting risky causes of feminism and nationality and featuring an interview with IRA volunteer Mairead Farrell

### The Commitments (1991)

Cultural critics were concerned about the effect of popularity of Irish themed film would have on Ireland's sense of self.

## The New Film Board

- A direct result of the New Wave
- A continuation of the Film Board with more money, new crew, and relaxed regulations on tax relief

### Ardmore Returned

- Free from National agendas and ethos of ideal Irish cinema
- Just a production base

"The phrase 'film industry' finally had meaning when applied to Irish based film making activity"

## 1990s - Early 2000s

### Michael Collins (1996)

Biggest grossing film ever in the Irish box office  
Sympathetic toward the republican cause

### Yu Ming is Anim Dom (2003)

## Today's Ratings System :

Themes:  
Violence:  
Sexual  
Content:  
Language:  
Drugs:

**6**

Will not upset kids  
No blood or injury detail  
Kissing, dating, innuendos non sexual  
nudity  
Infrequent mild language  
No Drug use or references

**12A**

Everyday crime, vague suicide  
Threats & more detail  
Brief Sexual Nudity  
Non-aggressive use - discriminatory if justified  
Soft drug use

**16**

16 and older  
Intense violence  
Strong sexual themes  
Strong language  
Hard drug use (not romanticised  
or by teens)

**PG**

Mature themes-Happy end  
Non graphic violence allowed  
Mild references / implied act  
If Justified. Discrimination if educational  
Mild reference & soft drug use

**15A**

15 and older  
Realistic violence Gore if justified (No sadism)  
Sex (not prolonged)  
Strong language  
Drug use (not romanticized)

**18**

18 and older  
"One of IFCO's guiding principles is that  
adults (i.e., persons over 18) should be  
free, within the law, to choose what they  
wish to view."



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## Film Descriptions

Thanks!

Questions?



## Irish Film Credits Script

When we spoke with Frank Sweeny he talked about the lost archival footage and sound that was erased from films and interviews that had been censored. He did not go to far into the specific rules and regulations of this censorship, but rather how it affected what is seen and heard by the public. I took an interest in the more formal regulations that impacted the production of this media. The Current modern review of films in Ireland is the IFB (Irish Film Board) which is like the modern American Motion Picture Association. This is where the rating and defining the audience for a film takes place and decisions about what is okay for the public are made.

The first Irish film to kick off Irelands production was *The Lad From Old Ireland* from 1910 which was noted as a typical immigration story that many people faced during the great famine. The main character travels to America which is noted as “the land of golden hope” where he finds economic and political prosperity. After receiving a message from his wife that they are about to be evicted he runs home to Ireland in time to pay the landlord and save his girl. Such story lines were greatly desired by the public. This was the first fiction film shot in Ireland, first film shot between two continents and the first American film produced abroad.

Then in 1914, more political films began to emerge. One of these films was *Ireland: A Nation* in 1914. This film significantly antagonized the British, making a mockery of both them and their informers, and outright stated that Ireland will not let it's reputation be ruined by the lies of the British in the intertitles. At the end of the film it presents a few moments to memorialize Arthur Griffith who was the founder of Sinn Finn. Due to such explicit political beliefs, it was censored and not released until three years later in 1917.

More political films continued, one of which, *Knocknagow* (1918) by James Mark Sullivan, was inspired by the infamous American film *Birth of a Nation* (1915) by D.W. Griffith. Sullivan was an Irish American journalist who was inspired by Griffith to found the Irish Film Company. Both directors came from a theatrical background and had much of the same cinematography style of wide, static camera angles. However, at this time in Ireland, *Birth of a Nation* did not hold the racist reputation that it does today, but rather one of a strong, firm identity in the midst of the civil war. An strength in Identity that Ireland looked to build in their media. *Knocknagow* took this and turned it into a strong representation of Irish life. “A sprawling story of eviction, forced, emigration and triumphant immigration” was to perform better than birth of a nation and show Irelands National identity. In the box office the film made even more money than *Birth of a Nation*. This take over of political propaganda did not sit well with the British and they began implementing censorship regulations and fighting for control through the media. Two films that continued under the conflict of censor ship include *In the Days of St. Patrick* (1920) and *Irish Destiny* (1926) which show appreciation and support for the Irish fight for independence and the catholic religion. The result of this was the British Establishment of the Censorship act of 1923. It established a formal protection over catholic and Irish values to be represented with respect and accuracy in film media. It's main goal was to uphold catholic morality at all times which was

key in the midst of British conflict with censorship regulation. *Guests of a nation* hit theatres with a radical political stance in support of the revolution heavily influenced by influential film *battleship prudovkin* which was the first film to use filmic elements such as editing, composition, symbolism and other graphic actions. It is clear why the British government would be upset at its influence over the republican cause. Its call to action through editing is intended to rally the forces and moral of a revolution against a totalitarian government. Other amendments to censorship were made throughout the 1930s through to the 90s, the most notable one being the 1992 amendment which allowed the minister of justice to appoint his own members of the Irish Film Board which was an important mark of government influence in film, its representation and government propaganda.

Then, in 1943 the National Film Institute was formed which continued the funding and production of film to uphold the Irish identity through world conflict and fund films that respect Irish history and morals. The only film to stand against these ethics at this time was *Our Country* (1947) to which the government retaliated with another film, *Housing Discrimination* (1953) to shift the public government away from themselves and onto the poor living conditions of Northern Ireland. The Northern government complained that their regional and demographic struggles were not the business of the Irish government and they had no right to represent them.

In 1953 Adorn Studios was born as the government's first attempt to fund and produce their own propaganda films and tell the world that Irish cinema had a place on the international stage. The film, *Mise Eire* (1959) was one of the few produced under this studio before its economic downfall in the 1960s and later integration into RTE. *Mise Eire* used all archival footage of Sinn Fein's win in the British parliament to become honored as the official history of the Irish state.

With the New Wave Cinema Reaching Ireland in 1962 the integration of multiple cultures into Irish identity became more possible than ever. The wave stressed self reflexivity and representation of one's own experience within Irish culture. Bob Quinn was the first filmmaker under this wave and worked to subvert the stereotype of western Ireland's family dynamic and tradition. Two other films under this movement included *Our Boys* and *Maeve*, which critique both academic abuse of young boys under Christian brothers and feminine identity in Ireland. Ironically, it is clear that *Maeve* was influenced by the British Film Institutions funding to portray Northern Ireland as a feminist region with resources illegal in the south. Regardless, both films debunked typical Irish stereotypes and challenged audiences to see Ireland in a different light.

In 1980s the Film Board was formed as the first chance to fund films without state support. One of the only films produced under this was *Angel* (1982) which was not well received for reinforcing old stereotypes of Ireland rather than a new self defined image of independence. It was believed that it's influence came from extra funding from the British Film Institute.

By the Late 1980s and 90s more feminist films emerged and mixed identity films about what it means to be Irish emerged such as *mother Ireland* (1988), a feminist film banned in the UK for



its extreme feminism and support for the IRA. Another film that emerged was *The Commitments* (1991) which concerned cultural critics for not being able to clearly define an Irish sense of self. It is clear in the film that the struggle to define what Irish Soul music, represented the media struggle to showcase what it meant to be Irish within the influence of so many different cultures. The splitting up of the band at the end of the film emphasized how Ireland will always be influenced by outside cultures and never directly defined.

In 1980 the new Irish Film Board was reformed with a bigger budget and crew to become the standard that it is today. 1996's *Micheal Collins* film saw the highest grossing box office film ever in Ireland and the start of explicitly mixed stories being captured and shared through visual media. All of this struggle to find identity and representation of various people lead us to the Irish Film Board rating system we have today, and a defined understanding of Irish cinema on the world stage.

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